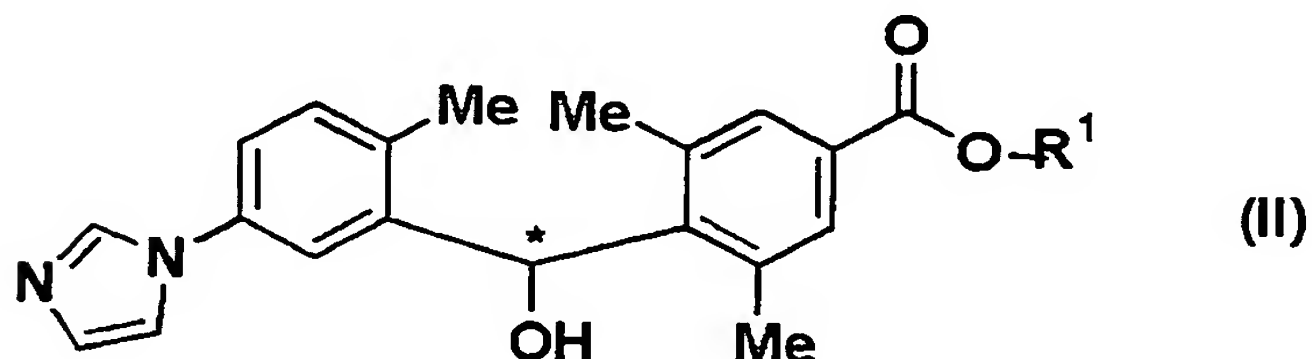
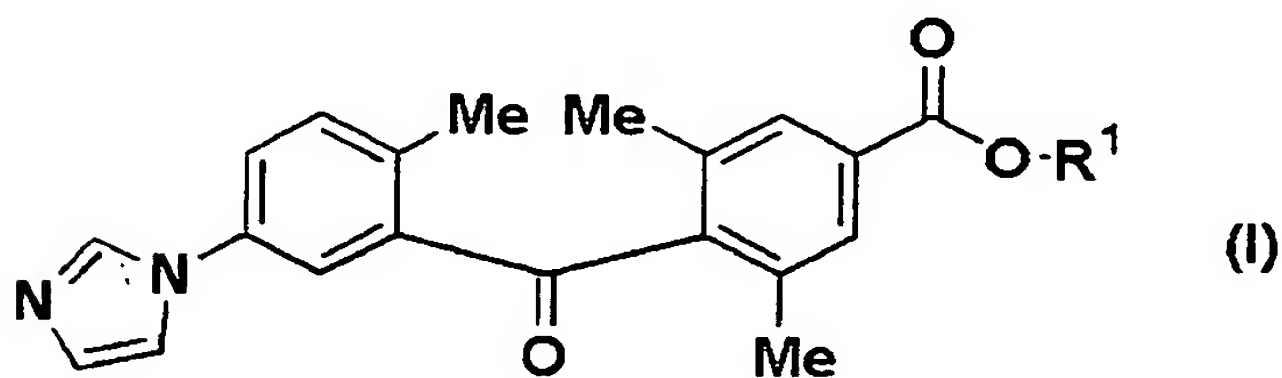


## Claims

1. A method of preparing optically active 4-[hydroxy[5-  
5 (imidazol-1-yl)-2-methylphenyl]methyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic  
acid represented by the following formula (II)

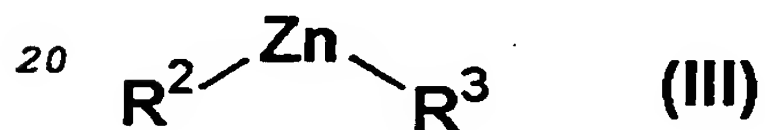


- wherein COOR<sup>1</sup> is a carboxylic acid or a carboxylate and the  
10 carbon atom with \* is an asymmetric carbon atom, or an ester  
thereof, from 4-[5-(imidazol-1-yl)-2-methylbenzoyl]-3,5-  
dimethylbenzoic acid represented by the following formula (I)

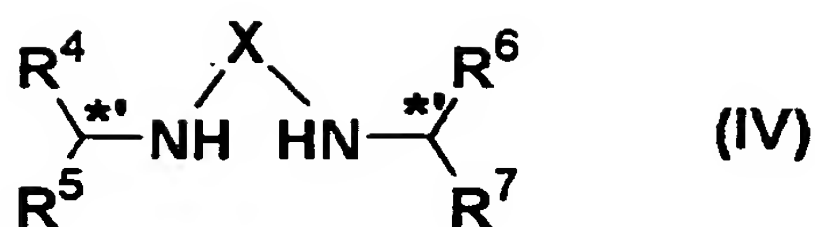


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- wherein COOR<sup>1</sup> is as defined above, or an ester thereof, which  
comprises reacting the compound represented by the formula (I)  
with a silane agent in the presence of a zinc compound  
represented by the following formula (III)



- wherein R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are each independently a lower alkyl group or  
a lower alkoxy group, or R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> in combination show an  
alkylenedioxy group optionally having substituent(s), and an  
25 optically active diamine compound represented by the following  
formula (IV)



wherein  $\text{R}^4$  and  $\text{R}^6$  are each independently a lower alkyl group,  $\text{R}^5$  is an aryl group optionally having substituent(s),  $\text{R}^7$  is an  
 5 aryl group optionally having substituent(s) or a lower alkyl group, X is an alkylene group or a cycloalkylene group, and one or both of the two carbon atoms with \*' is(are) asymmetric carbon atom(s).

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein  $\text{R}^1$  is an alkyl group optionally having substituent(s), a cycloalkyl group optionally having substituent(s) or an aralkyl group optionally having substituent(s) on the ring and/or the chain.

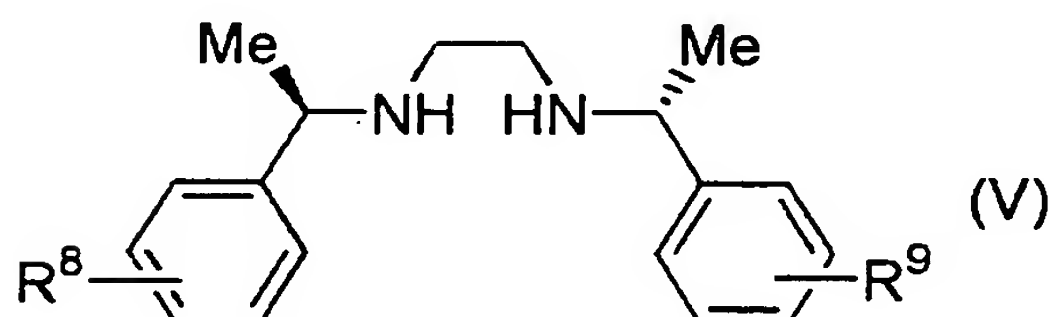
15 3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein  $\text{R}^2$  and  $\text{R}^3$  are each independently a lower alkyl group.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of alcohol or glycol.

20

5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the optically active diamine compound is a N,N'-bis-(1-phenylethyl)ethane-1,2-diamine compound represented by the following formula (V)

25



wherein  $\text{R}^8$  and  $\text{R}^9$  are each independently a hydrogen atom, a  
 halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a  
 30 nitro group, a cyano group or an aryl group optionally having

substituent(s),  
or an optical isomer thereof.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the N,N'-bis-(1-  
5 phenylethyl)ethane-1,2-diamine compound is (R,R)-N,N'-bis-(1-phenylethyl)ethane-1,2-diamine or (R,R)-N,N'-bis-[1-(4-bromophenyl)ethyl]ethane-1,2-diamine.

7. The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the silane  
10 agent is selected from the group consisting of trimethylsilane, diethylsilane, triethylsilane, phenylsilane, diphenylsilane, methylphenylsilane, dimethylphenylsilane, diethylphenylsilane, methyldiphenylsilane, tert-butyl-  
15 dimethylsilane, tert-butyl-diphenylsilane, trimethoxysilane, diethoxysilane, triethoxysilane, tributoxysilane, triphenoxysilane, (trimethylsiloxy)dimethylsilane, bis(trimethylsiloxy)methylsilane, triisopropoxysilane, tris(trimethylsiloxy)silane, tris(trimethylsilyl)silane and  
20 polymethylhydrosiloxane.

8. A method of preparing an optically active 4-[hydroxy[5-(imidazol-1-yl)-2-methylphenyl]methyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid ester which comprises reacting 4-[5-(imidazol-1-yl)-2-  
25 methylbenzoyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid ester with polymethylhydrosiloxane in the presence of zinc di-lower alkyl and an optically active diamine compound represented by the formula (V).

30 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising a reaction in the presence of alcohol or glycol.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising a reaction in the presence of ether.